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Institute of South Asian Studies
National University of Singapore
29 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
#08-06 (Block B)
Singapore 119620
Tel: (65) 6516 4239 Fax: (65) 6776 7505
www.isas.nus.edu.sg
<http://southasiandiaspora.org>



Pakistan: In the Cusp of Changes, Meeting Challenges

While the Pakistani military and civilian leaders, so often the opposing forces, now seem inclined for cohabitation at the highest echelons of power, the country's latest move towards a 'comprehensive dialogue' with neighbouring India is a new dynamic of wider regional and global importance.

Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Chandrani Sarma¹

Introduction

Pakistan today is in the cusp of changes. Some of these are positive and some, not so. Its politics are seemingly stable, but beneath the veneer there is a lurking feeling of disturbing disquiet. Its economy reflects a graph with a rising curve, but not as much as the potentials would dictate. Violent extremism is largely under control, yet the menace of fundamentalism keeps forever gnawing at its social fabric. Its foreign relations appear sound, still it seems to be smarting under a sense of friendlessness in the region.

¹ Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury is Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore. He was formerly Foreign Advisor (Foreign Minister) of Bangladesh. He can be contacted at isasiac@nus.edu.sg. Ms Chandrani Sarma is Research Assistant at ISAS. She can be contacted at isaschsa@nus.edu.sg. The authors, not ISAS, are responsible for the facts cited and opinions expressed in this paper.

To say that the calm is eerie would be an exaggeration. But also to say that there is no fear of turmoil would entail an understatement. Pakistan is a polity of contradictions that is muddling through for now. But whether these various elements constitute a sustainable equilibrium, and *what* might upset this intricate balance, and *when* and *how*, merit close and focussed examination. Such a study would not be a cause for either optimism or pessimism, but would most certainly be an invitation to a sober reflection on societal management.

A Classical Analogy

The Classical Latin historian Tacitus has emphasised the need to learn the ‘causes of things’ (*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*; he had said, ‘happy is the man who knows the causes of things!’). A search for such causality into the decline and fall of the Roman Empire had led Edward Gibbon and other such historians to enlist about 200 or so of them. But if one were to cluster them into major groups, there could broadly be four such: loss of control over the distant provinces, corruption and mis-governance, failing economy, military overspending and the burgeoning power of the praetorian guards. One could add to this list the ignoring of the advice of the Emperor’s aide into his ears (solicited, because one is told he was paid solely for this purpose, to remind the great one that man is no god!): “Remember, Caesar, thou art mortal”! Pakistan is no Roman Empire, Islamabad is no Rome, and the Prime Minister no Caesar, but the following analyses will show that those who run that country today could do well to engage the classical with the contemporary and learn from history.

The Politics of the Provinces

Punjab

The key province of Pakistan, by any stretch of imagination, is Punjab. Incidentally, it is not Pakistan’s largest in terms of size – the arid stretches that comprise Balochistan is – nonetheless, it is the nerve centre, the heartland, indeed the very essence of Pakistan. It is what the celebrated *Latium* was to the classical Roman Empire. Comprising nearly 205,000 square kilometres of territory, and over 101 million population, Punjab is both the bread-basket and the sword arm of Pakistan. The name ‘Punjab’ meaning the land of ‘five rivers’ is derived from the tributaries of the Indus that water the region. These have been used to build the extensive irrigation system that has led to the production of rice, sugarcane, millet and corn and the cash-

crop cotton. But the lack of redistribution of land, except some acquisitions by the new military and bureaucratic elite, has resulted in a small set of feudalistic landlords ruling the roost, politically and socially. Both the poor and the rich have migrated in large numbers, the first to seek their fortune and the second to enjoy that they have already made. The diaspora has widened and deepened Punjab's global linkages.

The seat of government of Punjab, Lahore, is also Pakistan's cultural capital. The national poet Sir Mohammed Iqbal lived and wrote there. Once the mighty Moghuls ruled the entirety of India from within the walls of the Lahore Fort. Its ruins bear testimony, but do not necessarily reflect, the glorious past. A well-lit memorial marks the spot where the Pakistan Resolution was moved by the party of the founder of the nation, Quaid-e Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in 1940. The cannon made famous by Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim* guards the entry to the Museum, still a metaphor for Punjab's military clout. The city remains Pakistan's finest. There are the palatial structures along the Mall that denote the passage of Pakistan's history. The Residency building that was once the Civil Service Academy that trained the mighty who ruled Pakistan is a deserted guest house which brings to mind Omar Khayyam's lines: "... the lion and the lizard keep the courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep!" It is important to note that the falling into disuse of this institution has not happened because of a decline (or otherwise) in the nature of governance but because of a change in the composition of the elite who govern! Other sparkling buildings in the extended city reflective of a growing entrepreneurial spirit, are more indicative of the prosperous present.

In Pakistan's domestic economic and political terms, the Punjabis have done well. The economy of the province has grown four times since 1972, when the nascence of Pakistan, in its current form (without Bangladesh) occurred. Its contribution to Pakistan's agricultural sector is over 60%, including 76% of the nation's annual food-grain production. It lacks a coastline, yet industries have flocked there. Its contribution to Pakistan's manufacturing sector is well over 52%. Punjab also contributes more than 57% of the military personnel, down from 71% in 2001, through a conscious policy effort. Unsurprisingly, the Punjabis dominate the government and politics in Pakistan. The province provides the three most powerful men in the country, the three Sharifs: Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif. Chief Minister of Punjab, Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief of the Army, General Raheel Sharif. The pecking order of power is not necessarily in that sequence. Punjab is by far the most dominant province, and some issues of Pakistani politics flow from that preponderance, though it must be said, in all fairness,

efforts are continuously being made by the powers-that-be to moderate Punjab's influence. Much of it, though, is structural, and, therefore, unavoidable.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

North of Punjab lies the old North West Frontier, so-called during the era of the British Raj and the early Pakistan period, rather simplistically describing only its geographical location. It is now renamed Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP) reflecting its ethnic composition. Of its 21 million population, an overwhelming majority are *Pukhtuns* or *Pushtuns* often called *Pathans*, numbers that include those that regularly cross over from Afghanistan, in total disregard of, and often contempt for the British-drawn Durand Line set to demarcate the borders between today's Pakistan and Afghanistan. Known for its fierce war-like predilections that pit one tribe against the other in perennial conflicts, often through generations, particularly in regions still unregulated by federal law, the Federally Administered (there is a touch of irony in the name, as some would argue that they are not 'administered' at all!) Tribal Areas (or FATA). Their culture has scantily evolved over centuries, and the predominant value is still the *Pukhtunwali*, a way of life determined by the practices of offer of hospitality, preservation of honour, and the seeking of revenge.

The Pashtuns have been often romanticised in literature for being akin to the perceptions, particularly in the West, of the glorified 'noble savage'. But this has no bearing to historical veracity as the region was the cradle of old civilizations including '*Gandhara*'. The tribes also produced poets of the ilk of Khushal Khan Khattak, as long ago as three hundred years! The *Pushtuns* complicate matters for the authorities such as those representing the State, or simply law and order, by easily being attracted by extremist actions as those of the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and the like, not so much because of ideological convictions, but because of life-style similarities. Most *Pushtuns* would carry a rifle or a weapon of some sort, and many would simply be on the look-out for displaying their skills at using it! There was a time when the concept of '*Pushtoonistan*', a separate state for themselves, was popular, but now that movement has run out of steam, as there are few takers for another potential troublesome entity, already having to deal with Afghanistan, KP, and, as we will see later in the article, Balochistan.

But for the constant strife that dots this province, bombings and shootings are frequent phenomena, the province with 11.5% of Pakistan's population, has a share of roughly 10% of the GDP, is the poorest in Pakistan, ranking just above Balochistan. Having Afghanistan as a

neighbour, and the ‘great game’ of the powers that get played out there, have not helped. The KP has been susceptible to fall-outs from foreign invasions in the neighbourhood, Soviet and NATO, and to American drone attacks. Indeed it was in one of its districts, Abbottabad, that the al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who had apparently lived undetected as a simple *Pukhtun* for years, was located and killed by the Americans.

This region is akin to what Gaul or *Gallia* was to ancient Rome and its rulers, requiring centuries of efforts to keep under control. Politically, once its leadership, as of the legendary ‘Frontier Gandhi’, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and his son Wali Khan were left-wing, though there was a flip-side to it in the form of Qayyum Khan’s Muslim League. Currently, however, there has been a marked rightward swing, and the ruling party is the grandly styled ‘Tehreek-e-Insaaf’ – the ‘Path of Justice’ – led by the cricketer-turned-politician, the larger-than-life personality in the form of Imran Khan. While Pervez Khattak of his party is the Chief Minister based in the provincial capital, Peshawar, Imran strides the national scene as a Member of Parliament in Islamabad, with his eyes focussed on the Prime Ministership. He is seen as soft on the Taliban (doubtless a political strategy), hard on America, and empathetic towards the Army. Like those of Henry VIII, his wives have not lasted long, the latest marriage ending in less than ten months, but conservative Pakistanis do not appear to factor this into their political ratings and calculations, and this has not dented his popularity. But other factors have, such as the erratic behaviour as holding permanent, yet unsuccessful, rallies in the capital to bring down the government. Imran represents good looks, cricket, wealth and Oxford – everything that Pakistanis admire – but the authors have been told in their interviews that Imran’s bid to topple Nawaz Sharif would not succeed till such time as he is able to overcome the resistance of the Punjabi feudal lords. For that he might have to wait till the cows come home.

Balochistan

If Khyber Pukhtunkhwa is comparable to ancient Gaul, then Balochistan is most certainly Pakistan’s turbulent *Germania*. Julius Caesar had once said that the Gauls, though warlike, could be ultimately tamed, but the Germanic tribesmen were too ferocious, and unless conquered, could pose a threat to Rome itself. And so they did. Balochistan is Pakistan’s largest province in size, the poorest and the most susceptible to violence of all kinds, religious extremism, nationalist insurgency, and oftentimes plain thuggery. Its capital Quetta, once a town of pristine beauty, also hosts the infamous ‘Quetta Shura’ - the Al Qaeda leadership, which

some say, is being mollycoddled by the Pakistan Army. Of course, now that the Army has taken on the Al Qaeda in a big way (we shall discuss this later in the essay), with regard to this group it is placed between the devil and the deep blue sea. Balochistan has an area of 347,190 square kilometres, but a population of only 13 million, given its extremely dry desert climate, mountainous wilderness and also otherwise inhospitable terrain. The majority of the tribesmen are either Balochis, Brahuis, or Pushtuns, though there are also some among the population who are Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Punjabis and Sindhis.

Once rich in gas and mineral resources, its contribution to national economy since the mid-70s has dropped from 4.9% to 3.7%. Apart from being the most impoverished, Balochistan has the dubious reputation of having the highest infant and maternal mortality rate and the lowest literacy-rate in Pakistan. Balochis feel exploited and deprived, and therefore, for much of Pakistan's history, many have been up in arms. The nationalist insurgents direct their ire at all the three State actors they are connected with; Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. The "Balochistan Liberation Army" has been responsible for some deadly attacks in Pakistan. Pakistani authorities accuse India of offering the insurgents solace and succour, which the Indians deny. Military operations have led to allegations of human rights violations, and as the Baloch analyst Malik Siraj Akbar has said, public anger is "growing and uncontrollable". Some see the Pakistan federal government as not only not having learnt from the classical examples of past empires (such as the Roman), but also from the experience of the loss of East Pakistan (in 1971). The government is an alliance of different parties, led by Chief Minister Abdul Malik Baloch of the National Party. He is reputed to have good connections with Islamabad, and has indeed been able to have some key development funds released by the Centre.

Balochistan's good luck may be that it has caught the glad eye of China. As a part of China's 'One Belt One Road' strategy, Beijing has announced that it will pump in US\$ 46 billion by 2030 in infrastructural development in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and in the building of the Gwador port on the Arabian sea. If all goes well, these projects should boost Balochistan's economy. The insurgents are less sanguine and point to outsiders being the real beneficiaries of such schemes. They have not, therefore, desisted from attacking the Chinese, a unique experience for Pakistan's traditional 'all-weather friends', and so the military has decided to raise a division-strength force to protect its foreign friends. But greater protection will accrue if the aspirations are transformed into reality. This has been promised by the governments in both Quetta and Islamabad, but the proof of the pudding will be, as always, in the eating.

Sindh

The province of Sindh has the third-largest size – 141,000 square kilometres, and the second largest economy, contributing 30% -32.7%, on average, to the nation's GDP. Its population is 42.5 million, largely Sindhis in the countryside, and a variety of ethnicities crammed into Pakistan's largest metropolis, also the capital of the province, Karachi. This one-time capital of Pakistan still remains the economic hub, the centre of banking and industry of the nation. The city has grown exponentially in recent times, and has a population of anywhere between 10 and 15 million. This is also the region where most migrants from India, called *Muhajirs* are settled, which accounts for nearly 50% of the Karachi population being Urdu-speaking (19% in the province). Most of them belong to a political party called Muttahida Qaumi Muhmani (MQM) or United National Movement, a secular and powerful force in the city, and hence in the province. Politically the *Muhajirs* have often been pitted against the Sindhis, a phenomenon described in an analytical study by Tanvir Ahmed Tahir, entitled *Political Dynamics of Sindh, 1947-1977*. This was also where many Afghan refugees during that country's Soviet occupation in the 1980s sought shelter. Consequently 25% speak Pashto. The Sindhis here comprise a small minority of 0.3%. The numbers are important because these distinguish Karachi from the rest of the Sindh province. Law and order is often an issue in the megapolis, including sectarian violence and other crimes, and calm is sought to be preserved by the Rangers, a para-military force, and even private companies such as the '*Pathfinder*', ably led by a retired army-officer turned entrepreneur and analyst, Ikram Sehgal.

Sindh is the home province of the Pakistani political legends - the Bhuttos. Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Asif Zardari, Benazir, and Bilawal have been, and are, family scions. Unsurprisingly their Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is dominant politically and provides the Chief Minister, Qaim Ali Shah. This leftish political entity is a fierce opponent of the Pakistan Muslim League of Nawaz Sharif, the Federal Prime Minister. While at high levels, and especially in the urban areas, the left- right tussle continues, the *waderas* or the Sindhi landlords rule the roost in the countryside. Sindh, like Balochistan, has its share of nationalist parties and movements. *Jiye Sindh* (literally, 'long live Sindh') movement of G M Syed in the earlier years merits mention. There is a more contemporary one, a variant of the same, for so-called *Sindhudesh* (in style of Bangladesh), but these have to-date gained little political traction, and some are nipped in the bud by being labelled as "terrorists and anti-state saboteurs". The Army, assisted by the Rangers, keeps a watchful eye, much as the Roman legions would have done in remote *Britannia*.

Civilians and the Army, Sharif and Sharif

The most significant social and political institution in Pakistan is the military. It has over 617,000 personnel on active duty and is the seventh largest in the world in size. Out of Pakistan's total budget outlay of US\$ 42 billion as presented in June 2015, US\$ 7.5 billion was allocated to defence. While the increase in the total outlay was 4.8% over the previous year, in this sector it was a massive 11.6%. Two recent books, one by Ayesha Jalal ('The Struggle for Pakistan') of Tufts University, and the other by Christine Fair ('Fighting to the End') at Georgetown have been trenchantly critical of how so much funds have been eaten up by the 'men in Khaki' for so little contribution! All in the name of an existential threat from India, they have broadly argued. But today there are those who view the flip-side of the coin, perceiving the Army, not only as a non-feudal counter to the traditional landlords, but also as a principal deterrent to violent extremism. Its leader, General Raheel Sharif, is often said to be more popular, than his namesake (but no kin), Prime Minister Sharif. These 'plus points' form an important component of the Army's public relations drive headed by Lt General Asif Saleem Bajwa.

Time was when the reputation of the Army was in tatters. 'No famous victories' in battles or wars had been won over the arch-enemy, India. The episodes of 1971, the human rights violations perpetrated in the Eastern Wing followed by the disastrous loss of East Pakistan lowered its esteem, home and abroad. The interventions made in Pakistan's domestic political arena did nothing to improve it. The 'double game' of both using the Taliban in Afghanistan and fighting it at home landed it in a Machiavellian milieu that it found difficult to extricate itself from. Then there was the huge loss of face involved in the American military foray that eliminated Osama bin Laden deep within Pakistani territory. The Army's professional relationship with the Americans, a major source of its sustenance, was at its nadir. It was against such a backdrop that in November 2013 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appointed General Raheel Sharif as the Chief of Army Staff, superseding two senior officers. Raheel had impeccable credentials and came of a most decorated military family.

The new Army Chief set to work immediately. Having decided that the Taliban and the extremists deserved no quarters, he launched the operation known as '*zarb-i-azb*' on 15 June 2014 in North Waziristan along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The operations were further intensified after the school massacre in Peshawar when, in December 2014, 132 children were killed by extremists. A 20-point National Action Plan (NAP) was set up with the backing of all

political parties to step up the anti-terrorism drive under the stewardship of the Army. Acts of violence reached an all-time low. At least at a stated level, the generals said they perceived terrorists and the Taliban, now buttressed by the Islamist Caliphate (who have declared the region as *Khorasan* and a part of the Caliphate domain), as a greater existential threat than India. Raheel Sharif's popularity soared in Pakistan. Abroad, as in the United States, he has been received at levels far above that which would be dictated by protocol. The discussions have not remained confined to military matters, and have included the *hochpolitik* of international relations.

The budgetary reward has already been mentioned. So are the Praetorian guards of Pakistan, being fondly nurtured like those in Ancient Rome, and could the resultant accretion of power flowing from the lead-role in the State's current primary objective of curbing the extremists be a threat to the Republic? When Pakistan opted for nuclear weapons, a widespread belief was that, since a few such weapons – and with around 120 or so warheads this is more than a few – would obtain the necessary minimum deterrence against India, so defence costs could actually be reduced. This did not happen. The shift of the fight now directed at terrorism implies that the traditional funding would have to continue alongside with nuclear capabilities. Also, the Commander at battalion level derives little comfort in nuclear ordnance. He wants perks: better salaries, improved housing, more transport facilities, quality education for army children, and conventional weapons to keep his ordinary troops equipped. It is not surprising therefore, that out of this huge allocation to defence of US\$ 7.5 billion, only US\$ 1.6 billion has been earmarked for procurement and maintenance of arms and ammunition, strictly military needs. Such affection from civilian financial policy masters could, as is feared in some quarters, whet appetite for more. This does not mean assumption of direct State control. That would be self-destructive and would invite global opprobrium, when the Army also wants external assistance. However this is not to say that 'remote control' of some key policy sectors are not desirable. Some have called it the 'soft coup' paradigm.

There are some signs that this may be happening, or at least is seen to be happening. At a meeting of Corps Commanders in Rawalpindi, Pakistan's military head-quarters, General Raheel Sharif, according to the report issued by the Army's media wing, called for "governance initiatives" to complement the "success" of the on-going fight against terrorism. In other words, there were 'governance-gaps' in the implementation of the National Action Plan, and therefore, of government's policies. Earlier he was said to have complained to the Prime Minister in private. Now he was going public. He had touched a hornet's nest. Immediately there were two

kinds of reactions. One was Federal PML Ministers blaming non-PML provincial governments such as that of Sindh of failing to address corruption and hence attracting criticism from the Army. The other reflected deeper and darker fears, and implied closing of ranks of the civilian political elite. The Leader of the opposition in the Senate, Aitzaz Ahsan said in the house: “I am disappointed with the governance of the present government. But the ISPR (Inter-services Press Relations) and the corps commanders have no right to publicly talk about the democratic and constitutional government of Nawaz Sharif” (*Dawn*, Karachi, 13 November 2015). He confirmed as much in a discussion with the authors. A sense of democratic norms is obviously prevalent, which might make policy interventions by the Army only more subtle, but not any less substantive.

Extrapolations and Conclusions

So, domestically, what we are likely to see something akin to a pull-devil, pull-baker contest between the civil and the military authorities. Though Nawaz Sharif appears to accept a diminished political stature, this is unlikely to translate into a full formal control by the military. The Army is likely to follow up on the governance debate and will maintain a modicum of pressure on the government. Raheel Sharif’s term will come up for extension in November 2016, and significant personalities as former President Musharraf have come out in its favour, but Nawaz will have a chance to weigh his options at that time. Every Chief has some impatient subordinates, and this would give Nawaz some manoeuvrability, should Raheel get too big for his boots. Also, he could be elevated to Field Marshal, a rank that will give Raheel batons but no battalions. That is, if Nawaz calculates then that a change would be better for him, which is not certain. For now the equilibrium will sustain.

The Army’s foray into foreign affairs and security will continue, as evidenced in the acceptance by the Prime Minister of the (reportedly) Army nominee for the post of National Security Adviser (NSA), Lt General Nasir Khan Janjua. The received wisdom is that the Army wanted a more appropriate counterpart (in its view) of India’s NSA, Ajit Doval, than the much more senior, and gentler, Sartaj Aziz, the Foreign Adviser, and effective Foreign Minister. Janjua is said to have worked on *Azm-i-nau* (literally, ‘A New Beginning’), a set of exercises reflecting the Pakistani counter-strategy to India’s *cold start*, an offensive *blitzkrieg*-inspired doctrine.

However, it seems that Janjua and Doval did manage to ‘kick-start’ a process of engagement that might lead Indo-Pak relations somewhere a tad more positive than has been the case. Aspirations for good relations between these two neighbours would have to be a triumph of hope over experience. Nonetheless there have been periods when they have done the right thing, which means they have talked and traded, and not attacked each other. Might we be seeing yet another entry into such a phase of ‘working co-existence’? Nawaz and Modi met on the side-lines of the ‘climate change conference in Paris’ in November and took a decision that might at least change one climate, which is the thawing of the frosty bilateral relations. They decided that their NSAs should meet in Bangkok, which they did, on 6 December 2015 for four hours. It seems the two followed an agenda that covered both terrorism and Kashmir, significant as India and Pakistan usually wanted to flag one or the other. The two agreed that the India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj would travel to Islamabad, also in December, for a ‘Heart of Asia’ Ministerial on Afghanistan.

This she has done. A glimmer of hope appeared just beyond the rim of the saucer. Swaraj has affirmed that the discussions have resulted in a ‘breakthrough’. What was once a ‘composite dialogue’, which later became ‘resumed dialogue’ would now be called ‘comprehensive bilateral dialogue’. It would comprise nine ‘pillars’; Confidence Building Measures, Siachen, Sir Creek, Wullar barrage/Tulbul navigation project, economic and commercial cooperation, counterterrorism, narcotics control, humanitarian issues and religious tourism. The last two were fresh additions, perhaps to show ‘advance’, even if confined to the merely listing of agenda items. Importantly, it was all but agreed that Modi would attend the SAARC Summit in Islamabad in 2016. In most parts of the world such trips would be considered routine, particularly for scheduled regional events, but in the case of India and Pakistan, these would be rarer than once in a blue moon! Swaraj also met Nawaz, there was much demonstrated cordiality, and the leaders switched between English, Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi to maximise on their communicative skills. Sometimes in diplomacy between these two countries, promises have proved to be more brittle than lovers’ oaths. The two NSAs seem bent on making the dialogues, not only ‘constructive’, but also ‘non-accusatory’, which, particularly the latter, might require a huge leap of faith and trust!

Risks of derailment abound. For instance, another terrorist action on Indian soil would upset the apple-cart. However, account must be taken of the fact that given the variety of forces that have taken to violent extremism now, it might be more complex to identify the sources of

perpetrators. Sadly, they are legion. Both sides should understand the inefficacy of rushing to war in such scenarios.

In terms of broader foreign relations, beyond India, Pakistan also has its work cut out. Globally, there is an apprehension that it has a growing culture of extremism that has even penetrated its diaspora. The recent shooting incident in California has done nothing to dispel it. To any immigration officer anywhere in the world a Pakistani passport inspires, for reasons fair and unfair, a mixture of caution and apprehension. Its best friend, China, is circumspect about possibilities of empathy in Pakistan for its ‘extremists’ in Xinjiang. The Saudis, the other good friend, is miffed at Pakistan’s hesitation at not fully backing it in Yemen. In the subcontinent Pakistan ploughs a curiously lonely furrow. Relations with India had plunged, and all eyes will focus on the immediate future if these can be pulled away from a deeper crevice by the recent initiatives. With Bangladesh, terms are at an all-time low, following some perceived interference in Dhaka’s domestic affairs that have raised Bangladesh’s ire, and opened up old wounds. Nearer home, with Afghanistan, a good beginning with President Ashraf Ghani is losing direction, and steam. Trust with Washington is increasingly getting strained. These issues need addressing. The historical analogy, the reference to antiquity, is meant to be an antidote to contemporary errors, as past is the perpetual spring from which the wisdom of the present can, indeed needs must, be drawn. Delay or denial of the realities would be tantamount to avoidance of responsibilities, which is surely the wrong way of going about it. The sooner this recognition dawns on Islamabad, the better for Pakistan, the region and the world.

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